



miniMAG

issue14

Olfactory

St. Kilda

Mum lights her smoke in St. Kilda—

/ my innocence is on the train's behind /

I should've left him a long time ago—

/ there are market stands of dog leashes, red pouches, &
bubble dough candles before the promenade / I buy a red ring
here, one which looks as if I captured a ladybug's soul—

/ one which contrasts against threatening shadows /

I remember he had a big watch, I remember which
shadows gulp the swallows—

/ I eat fried fish on Shakespeare Grove / mum likes her bread
& dips / a vintage car meetup, a few motorcycles too / I buy
three books at the bookstore across the road /

I am in St. Kilda / laden with dogs sniffing my knee /
& a guy about my age in a bomber jacket / he smells
familiar, like someone I used to know / lanky, asking
for his things back / a gargoyle with his mother—

/ I light my eye in St. Kilda / we did not have time
to go to the beach / I always have time for a ladybug /
& a long neck turtle / I am happy that he does not
think this way / & that it is plainly mine.

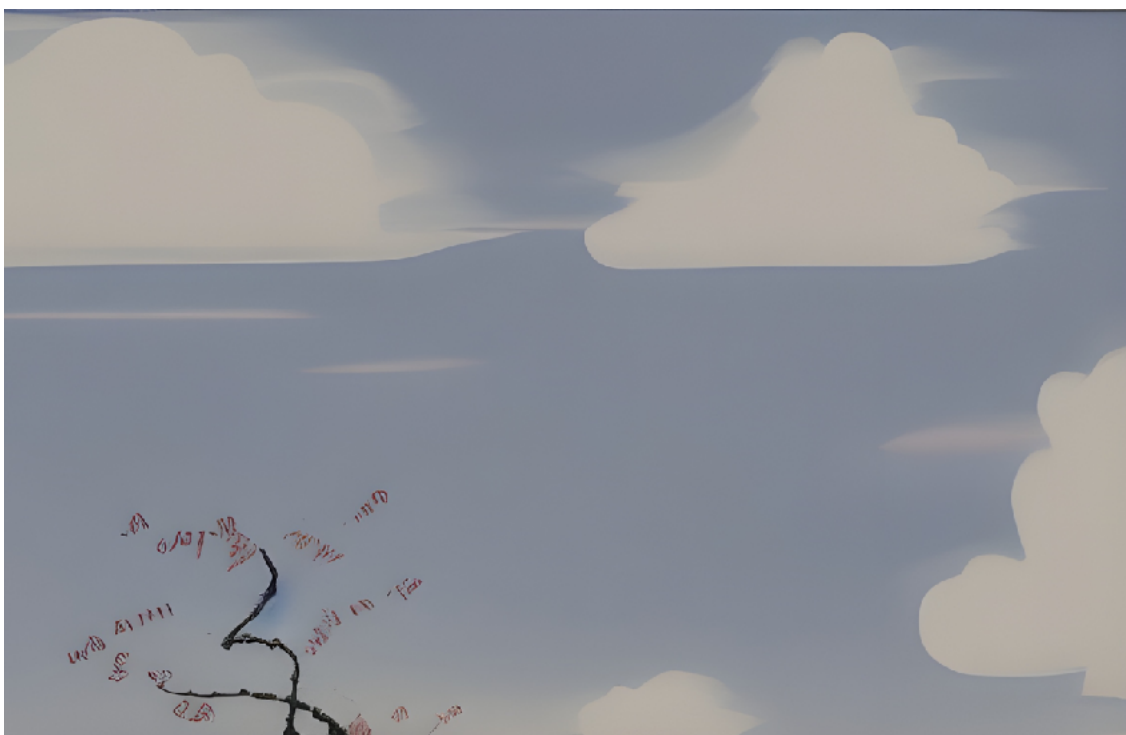
By Dorothy Lune



刹那天地

我藏着一个秘密
奔赴那抹暧昧的怪圈
循习着轮回的渲染
幻觅到涅槃的狂欢
前世那朵曼陀罗花的心蕊
沉睡着一颗清晰的米粒
右上方还伴着一簇青色的鸟
她是大？她是小？
静谧还是舞蹈？没人知道
她或许只愿祈祷
亲吻那一水清凉的火焰而燃烧

By 空知



The Might of Zareth

By K.K. Wing

Zareth had the most unfortunate stench about him. Wherever he went, others would hasten the conversation and reach the end as quickly as possible. I too was guilty of this. I could not tell you how often I would feign an excuse to leave the conversations I had with Zareth. Yet, the oddest thing in Zareth's predicament wasn't his smell, but rather the unwillingness of others to inform him of his foul odor. The world tolerated it, afraid of offending him. Such preposterous nonsense — that we — would be scared of offending the man that offended us! I tapped my fingers on my chin, in a thought telling Zareth he simply stunk. A direct approach would be the answer, yet, I could not possibly bear the burden of telling him directly, and be the one to suffer the shame that would hurt the man; but it must be done. Mustering up the courage, I took a step toward my destiny. A creeping of the door and to the hallways, the all too familiar smell lingered. It grew stronger with every step. Zareth was near.

There he was, chatting with Joyce, a fiery redhead with emerald eyes. Her nose twitched, and legs parted, a posture to

which anyone saw was one of flight and impatience. She glanced at me and from earshot I heard her words.

"Sorry! I need to speak with Kenny."

Quicker than a gazelle fleeing from danger, her delicate hands wrapped around my arm, dragging me away from my purpose and goal. My arm, wedged between her breasts, enchanted my brain. She cast a curse on me, causing me to lose awareness of the smelly man and instead bask onto the smells of her perfume. We entered the hallway far from the glancing eyes of Zareth. Without even a word of gratitude, Joyce left me quickly rubbing her nose as her foot made haste to the closest exit. A reminder of my foolishness. The clock struck five, and the scampered feet of hundreds of individuals exited the building. Without the telltale musk in the hallways, I too knew Zareth joined in the stampede. Taking my cup of coffee, I vowed once again, the same thing I vowed under each new moon, a swear that I will complete this task.

Tuesday was a great day. A dark roast coffee and a chocolate glazed donut resting on a white napkin accompanied my morning. Slowly, the smell of coffee dissipated and my fingers on the keyboard grinded to a halt. I noticed a distinct smell. It was unmistakable. The odorous musk wafted around my office. Not even the old, musty air inside my poor old aunt Hilary's coffin could cause such a foul stench. It was Zareth. Turning around — unable to take a large breath of air, I gazed into his fat face. He stood with a bright smile on his face, blissfully

unaware of the discomfort he caused. Every exhale from his mouth drifted into my office, exchanging the smells of my coffee with the odor of his breath.

"Hey Kenny, you wanted to speak with me the other day?"

"Uh yeah..."

The miasmic odor hindered my judgment. It could have been finished there. I could have told him he stunk and needed to practice proper hygiene, but the words would not exit my mouth. As if a pollen of muck cast a spell over my mouth, prohibiting the necessary words to be said. I wanted to; two distinct words raced across my brain. The two most important words that needed to be said to finally conquer and save this daily torture of nausea. My stomach churned as the smell began to grow stronger, overwhelming my mind. My courage began to falter, and soon the words that were so clear disappeared into indescribable feelings of panic and escape. I needed Zareth to leave immediately. I spoke.

"Don't worry about it."

"Cool man, see you later."

He left. I slumped over in complete defeat and agony. I failed once again to tell the man with the stench fouler than a corpse, to clean himself. Ashamed of my inability, I could do only one thing. I opened the window to help dissipate what was left of Zareth's presence.

That was not the only incident I had with Zareth that day. We sat together during lunch in the middle of the cafeteria; his decision, not mine. He held, in one hand, a ham, egg, and cheese sandwich; on the other, a bottle of cherry flavored Coca-Cola. Hunched over, he took a bite of his sandwich. He chewed with his mouth open smacking his jaws again and again. Without even swallowing the cud in his mouth, he took a swig of his drink. In one mighty gulp, he swallowed the mixture without any trouble or hesitation.

His buttocks hung over the sides of the chair he sat on. Legs wide apart, without any distance from his body and the table. The back of his shirt lifted from his position, and revealed a large crack exposing parts of his buttocks. Yet, his largest offense was not his eating habits — I too had questionable practices — but his stench. I could not withstand his smell anymore; I had to leave the cafeteria.

"See you later Zerath."

"Bye Kenny. Do you still want what's left of your cookie?"

"Take it. It's yours."

Disgusting.

Thursday came, and I had the unfortunate experience of meeting Zareth once again. He waddled through the hallways, stinking the corridor with his musty foul odor. This was it; a time to finally tell Zareth of his stench. I gritted my teeth,



clenched my fists, and steeled my nerves. I just needed to say a few words to him. That was it. Less than ten seconds was all I needed. A single foot forward, I stopped in front of him, with a smile of irritation — to hide my discomfort and inability to breathe. It took the courage of over ten men to do what I am doing now; to destroy what was once there, a culture well established in the environment, it will be I to bring it to ruin.

“Hey buddy. I need to tell you something.”

“Can it wait, Kenny? I’m on my way to meet Joyce.”

“I’ll walk with you.”

Turning to the side, I huffed a few breaths as quickly as I could trying to minimize the effects of the noxious boggart next to me. The effectiveness was minimal. Joyce’s office was only down the hallway, and immediately to the left, but those steps, about twenty, felt longer than a Roman league. Both the Republic and Empire would be proud as I carried the weight of the world upon my shoulders, ready to conquer a burden not even Emperor Nero would wish upon his greatest enemies.

Zareth turned the doorknob into Joyce’s room. Immediately I saw her face change from one of laughter and joy to one of scowl and disgust.

“Hey,” Joyce said, “what’s up?”

“I was wondering, if you wanted to get lunch with me?” Zareth asked.

“Oh...Sorry, I’m...” Joyce immediately turned her head to me.

“I already agreed to go eat lunch and dinner with Kenny.”

“That’s cool,” Zareth said. He walked out of the door without a word.

I huddled toward the corner, trying to grab the trashcan nearby. I was too slow. Joyce’s fingers snatched the bucket right underneath my hands. Her face buried inside of it, and immediately sounds of expulsion hurled inside the room. I rushed toward her window, frantically trying to open the glass that would free me from the miasma floating inside the room. Succeeding, I stuck my head out immediately, creating the same sounds Joyce made only moments ago. Bits of donuts and coffee from earlier left my body and fell to the ground below.

“Did you see where he went?” I asked Joyce.

“Ugh... Just follow the smell.” She was still reeling from the stench.

Shaking my head and rearming myself with the fresh air from outside, I set off on my quest once again. “I need to tell him how much he stinks.”

“Kenny... take the oranges from my fridge; you’re going to need it.”

I found him sitting alone outside in the pavilion. His palms closed together, interlocking his fingers save the twiddling of his thumbs. Zareth was watching the birds sing on the branches of the cherry blossom trees that created the perimeter of the area. He saw me, then turned his head back toward the ground. Peeling the orange Joyce gave me, I tossed away the flesh, holding the rind underneath my nostrils.

“Why didn’t you tell me you and Joyce were dating?” Zareth asked.

“I’m not.”

“Then what’s your secret? Why did she say yes to eat lunch with you, but not me?”

This was the opening I needed. The Gods blessed me with a clear shot to the wounded beast. A single strike to slay the demon, stunned from the magic cast by a woman. With fiery confidence built upon days of struggle and experience, the words released out of my mouth: “It’s because you stink.”

“Stink?”

“Yea you have an odor to you man. Just letting you know as a friend. You smell like you haven’t showered in a month.”

A sense of relief washed over me. Like the rains expunging away the filth in the streets, those words cleansed the burden

off my shoulders, elevating me closer toward Nirvana. A tingle raced through my brain, lifting any sense of guilt, shame, and fear I once felt. It was as if Saint Peter nodded in approval, embalming another good deed to my name.

“Oh...,” Zareth said, “do I really smell that bad?”

“Terrible.”

“Thanks for letting me know Kenny. I appreciate it.”

Zareth waddled into my office the next day. The stench of death disappeared. It was a miracle. There was no need to hold my nose, nor open the window. My lungs inhaled the oxygen without any trouble. Fresh air was plenty, given freely to anyone in the vicinity.

“Hey Kenny. Thanks for telling me I stink. Joyce said she thought I was wearing new cologne.”

“Not a problem man. Just looking out for you.”

“Yeah, thanks again.”

He left my office without further commotion or fanfare. It was a day of normalcy. I leaned back on my chair. It would be a memory for the ages. A story filled with courage, fear, drama, friendship, and redemption. A story where the hero rescued a damsel in distress, overcame doubt, slayed the demon, and

ultimately saved the world and another man. I may have been a hero, but I deserve none of the praise or adoration. Hymns should never be sung in my name. The true ending was Zareth returning to being Zack.

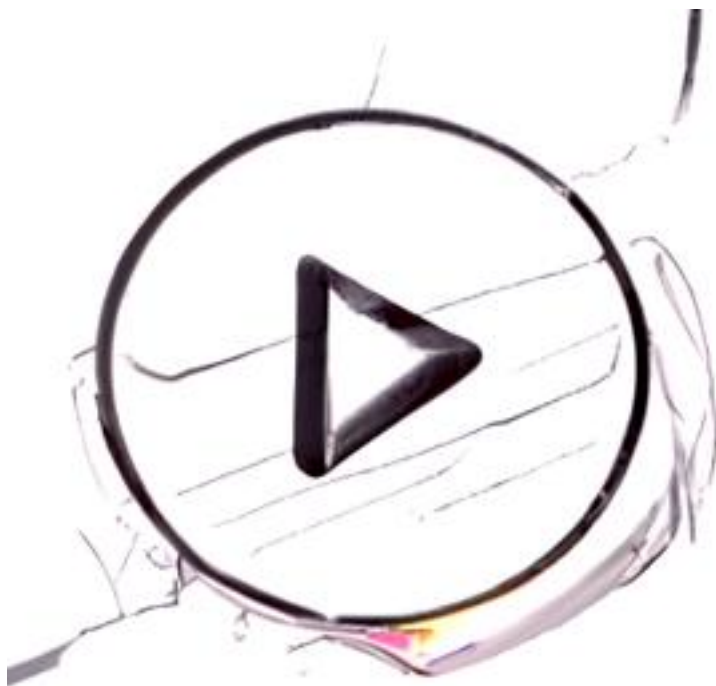


fish curry haunting

By T.R. San

coriander colors my new teeth wrong
without being bitten— it gets stuck
like a mission to be fishsick, stubborn
and saliva-borne, tongue tip-wary—
shouts in its sleep: taste me! taste me-

and the crushed garlic and the cumin
and the stabbed chillies and the alive
fisheyes, and my mouthwalls in them
pink and pretty like that delicious fillet
o'fish— i chew like the sea, quietens it.



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